

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

James Drummond and the Black Kangaroo Paw - James Drummond proposed the name *Anigozanthos Molloyiae* for the Black Kangaroo Paw in a letter he sent to the editor of the *Inquirer* in June 1843. The letter was not published and the species was first named by W.J. Hooker in 1847 in the *Botanical Magazine* (pg 73: t. 4291) as *Anigozanthos fuliginosus* Hook.

A new genus and species were named by Drummond and Harvey in *Hooker's J. Bot. Kew Gard. Misc.* 7:57 in 1855 as *Macropidia fumosa* J.L Drumm. ex Harvey. The decision to do this jointly must have arisen from Harvey's visit to Perth in April 1854 when he spent a few days in the field with James Drummond. By this time Drummond may have become convinced that the species was best placed in a new sister genus to *Anigozanthos*.

Druce subsequently recognised that the earlier (1847) specific epithet had priority so made the formal combination into *Macropidia* in the *Bot. Soc. Exch. Club Brit. Isles* 1916: 634 in 1917 as *Macropidia fuliginosa* (Hook.) Druce.

This species grows abundantly in the Hill River area and it has been generally assumed that this area was the type locality. That this was the likely type locality was not considered correct by Hopper (*Flora of Australia* 45:126, 1987) who cites the type locality

as "near Moore River, W.A., 1843, Johnston Drummond; holo: K, iso:BM, both n.v., *fide* D. Geerinck, *Bull. Jard. Bot. Etat* 40:275 (1970)". This means that at least since 1970, systematic botanists have been clear that the type specimen of *Macropidia fuliginosa* was labelled as collected by Johnston Drummond from "near Moore River".

I too had my doubts that the Hill River was the original collection locality since James Drummond did not collect there until 1850. The plant was collected for him by his son Johnston who shepherded the family's flock near New Norcia and was never as far away as Hill River. He was speared in the Moore River area in July 1845.

Since publishing *The Drummonds of Hawthornden* the exact place where Johnston was killed has come to hand, at Yarrawindah, a tributary brook which flows into the Moore River near New Norcia. In 1961 I found Black Kangaroo Paws growing in open forest near Yarrawindah Brook and believe that Johnston collected it there. Unfortunately that land has since been cleared.

The species today has been collected as far south as the hills just to the east of Muchea, and is also known from lateritic hills east of Gingin (Hopper 1987 *Flora of Australia*; Hopper 1993 *Kangaroo Paws and Catspaws: a Natural History and Field Guide*).

Whether Johnston Drummond could have collected the type specimen at these more southerly localities remains conjecture. However it is unlikely because such localities were well removed from routes between Toodyay and the Moore River in the 1840s.

James Drummond wrote that it was a true flower of mourning – as a tribute to Mrs Molloy's death in 1842. The death of Johnston Drummond, the collector of the plant, would have given it deeper significance when his father mourned his death in 1845.

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A Record of a Blind Snake, *Ramphotyphlops pinguis* on the Swan Coastal Plain, Perth, Western Australia – The endemic Western Australian blind snake *Ramphotyphlops pinguis* (Waite 1897) is one of three species recorded from the Perth region, and is considered absent from the Swan Coastal Plain (Bush *et al.* 1995). Storr *et al.* (2002) also notes that all records are from localities on the raised plateau, reflecting a preference for heavier soils and How and Dell (1993) also state that *R. pinguis* is

one of four snakes known from the greater Perth metropolitan area which is either totally or principally restricted to the Darling Scarp or Plateau.

On 11 February 2004 at 2135 hr, I collected an active blind snake on the Old Yanchep Road at Carabooda 31°34'03"S 115°42'41"E, approximately 45 kilometres north of Perth. The air temperature was estimated to be between 19–21°C with a slight wind. The yellowish soil at the collection site is indicative of the Spearwood Dune system, and supported a mixed *Banksia attenuata* woodland with emergent *Banksia grandis* over *Dryandra sessilis*, *Xanthorrhoea preissii* and *Hakea* sp. Considering the location on the Swan Coastal Plain, I expected the blind snake to be *R. australis*, which is commonly found throughout the Perth region (pers. obs.).

Upon closer examination in the hand, I noticed the blind snake had a stout body, dark body colouration and a slightly angular snout that are diagnostic characters for *R. pinguis* (Storr *et al.* 2002). I collected and lodged this specimen (R125664) at the WA Museum, where its identification was determined to be an adult male *R. pinguis* (snout-vent length: 276mm, tail length: 13mm, weight: 17.2g).

Geographical proximity to the nearest Western Australian Museum records of *R. pinguis* on the coastal plain include specimens from Forrestfield (R82627), Kalamunda (R29754)